Abstract of the Disclosure

A method of performing a financial transaction involves a provider of goods or services, a purchaser of goods or services, a credit card issuer that has issued a credit card to the purchaser, and an information clearing center with a private credit card database coupled to a private network. When a transaction is performed between the provider and the purchaser, a further identifier different from the credit card identifier is associated with the purchaser. The purchaser's further identifier -- but not said credit card identifier -- is communicated to the information clearing center over the Internet. The private credit card database retrieves the purchaser's further identifier and performs a secure mapping between the further identifier and the purchaser's credit card identifier. The purchaser's credit card identifier is then securely communicated from the information clearing center to the credit card issuer. The credit card issuer charges the purchaser's credit card based at least in part on the securely communicated credit card identifier. Since the only transmission of the purchaser's credit card number is from the information clearing center to the credit card issuer via a highly secure connection that cannot be hacked, this information is kept secret so that credit card fraud is avoided.